



## ENGLISH VOCABULARIES: FORMAL, INFORMAL, AND SLANG 1

**Various occasions call for various kinds of language.**

- A. Directions:** Where will you usually see and hear the *formal* words in the box? In official documents and reports, literary works, and speeches. Use a dictionary to look up any words you don't know. Then write each word next to the *informal* word below that has the same meaning.

**abolish**  
**perceive**

**baffle**  
**perturb**

**calculate**  
**quest**

**massive**  
**signify**

**notable**  
**tedious**

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <b>understand</b> _____ | 6. <b>huge</b> _____    |
| 2. <b>figure</b> _____     | 7. <b>confuse</b> _____ |
| 3. <b>ban</b> _____        | 8. <b>famous</b> _____  |
| 4. <b>mean</b> _____       | 9. <b>boring</b> _____  |
| 5. <b>bother</b> _____     | 10. <b>search</b> _____ |

- B. Directions:** The informal word in each sentence appears in **boldface**. Circle a letter to identify the formal word that could replace it.

- At the sight of the brightly colored balloons, the child broke into a **sudden** smile.  
a. relevant      b. spontaneous      c. delirious
- The archaeologists became very excited when they saw the **writing** on the walls of the tomb.  
a. trophy      b. portrayal      c. inscription
- The hikers were surprised to find that a huge boulder **barred** their path.  
a. obstructed      b. prevailed      c. divulged
- The detectives thought that the suspect's story was probably a **lie**.  
a. falsehood      b. misdemeanor      c. felony
- When Melanie slipped and fell on the ice, she **broke** her arm.  
a. sprained      b. injured      c. fractured

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Informal English is the language used in newspapers, on television, and in most everyday conversations.**

When talking to friends, most people use some slang expressions. Slang might be vivid and interesting in speech, but it is not acceptable in formal or informal writing.

**A. Directions:** Write a slang expression from the box that has the same meaning as the **boldface** word or words. Hint: You will *not* use all the words in the box.

hangout    bimbo    batty    handle    bugs    chill    sleazy    ditz

1. "Slim" was given that **nickname** \_\_\_\_\_ about 10 years ago.
2. My dad always **pesters** \_\_\_\_\_ me about doing my homework.
3. Her high-pitched laugh makes her sound **silly** \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Sara suggested that we stop working and **relax** \_\_\_\_\_ for a while.
5. That rundown \_\_\_\_\_ neighborhood looks very **unappealing**.
6. The burger place was a favorite **gathering place** \_\_\_\_\_ for kids from our school.
7. Our **eccentric** \_\_\_\_\_ neighbor needs help from a psychiatrist.

**B. Directions:** Use vowels (*a, e, i, o, u*) to complete the words in the chart that have the same meaning.

FORMAL		INFORMAL		SLANG
1. <u>m</u> _ <u>l</u> _ <u>n</u> <u>c</u> <u>h</u> _ <u>l</u> <u>y</u>	⇔	sad	⇔	down
2. vulgar	⇔	<u>c</u> <u>h</u> _ _ <u>p</u>	⇔	tacky
3. _ <u>b</u> <u>s</u> _ <u>r</u> <u>v</u> _	⇔	see	⇔	eyeball
4. genteel	⇔	<u>r</u> _ <u>f</u> _ <u>n</u> _ <u>d</u>	⇔	high-toned
5. converse	⇔	talk	⇔	<u>g</u> _ <u>b</u>
6. slander	⇔	insult	⇔	<u>d</u> _ <u>s</u>

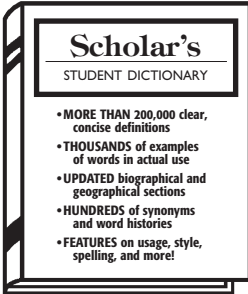
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**USING THE DICTIONARY 1**



**The quickest source of information about words is the dictionary.**



Here's one way to make it easier to use a dictionary. Think of a dictionary as being divided into three parts, or sections.

**A B C D E | F G H I J K L M N O P | Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

Flip the pages and you'll see that these three sections are fairly equal in size. So if you need to find a certain word, start looking in the appropriate section.

**A. Directions:** Circle the word that correctly completes each sentence.

1. The word ( *dogmatic* / *mentor* ) is in the second section of the dictionary.
2. The word *vindicate* is defined in the ( *second* / *third* ) section.
3. If you wanted to look up *benevolent*, you would turn to the ( *first* / *second* ) section.
4. The word ( *prominent* / *erudite* ) can be found in the first section of the dictionary.

**B. Directions:** You know that words defined in the dictionary (*entry words*) are listed in alphabetical order. Practice your dictionary skills by listing the following words in alphabetical order.

lapel	adjourn	demerit	sentiment	romance	oblong	fragile
geology	cyclone	inquiry	yonder	ballast	genial	matrimony
erupt	heifer	lavish	zenith	wary	jazz	kidnap

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 8. _____  | 15. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 9. _____  | 16. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 10. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 11. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 12. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 13. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 14. _____ | 21. _____ |

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Developing dictionary skills is an important step toward building an adult vocabulary.

Notice the guide words at the top of each regular page in the dictionary. The guide word on the left is the first entry on the page. The word on the right is the last entry.

**A**

**materialize**

**maudlin**

materialize ~~~~~  
~~~~~

matron ~~~~~  
~~~~~

**B**

**dash**

**dawdle**

dash ~~~~~  
~~~~~

daub ~~~~~  
~~~~~

**A. Directions:** Cross out the words that would *not* be defined on page A (as shown above). Then use your imagination—or check a dictionary—to list three words that *would* appear on that page.

1. *maternal*     *mayfly*     *mattress*     *material*     *mature*     *maze*

2. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Directions:** Look at the guide words at the top of page B. Then circle the word or words that correctly complete(s) each sentence below.

- Words that alphabetically fall ( between / outside ) the guide words will appear on that page.
- If you're looking for the word *deactivate*, you will have to turn ( back / forward ) a page or two.
- You ( will / will not ) find the word *daughter* on page B.
- You can probably find the word *dart* on the page just ( before / after ) page B.

**C. Directions:** Circle the words that would appear on each page shown below.

**gearing**

**generation**

geezer

generous

gable

geode

general

gelatin

genius

gazebo

**pliers**

**plump**

pledge

plummet

poach

plow

plowshare

plaza

ploy

plywood

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



**INFORMATION IN A DICTIONARY ENTRY 1**

**Did you know that a word's definition is only one part of a dictionary entry?**

A dictionary entry lists *inflected* forms of the entry word. These forms include . . .

**PLURALS**  
*child / children*  
*life / lives*

**VERB TENSES**  
*see / saw / seeing*  
*lie / lay / lying*

**COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES**  
*easy / easier / easiest*  
*bad / worse / worst*

**A. Directions:** Check a dictionary if you need help spelling the *plural* of each word below.

- 1. **agony** \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. **tomato** \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. **father-in-law** \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. **mouse** \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. **thief** \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. **radius** \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Directions:** Check a dictionary if you need help completing the chart of *verb tenses*.

PRESENT TENSE	PAST TENSE	PARTICIPLE
1. _____	↔ wrote	↔ writing
2. feed	↔ _____	↔ feeding
3. go	↔ went	↔ _____
4. _____	↔ sat	↔ sitting

**C. Directions:** A dictionary can help you identify the comparative and superlative forms of each entry word. Circle the word or words that correctly complete(s) each sentence.

- 1. The superlative form of *attractive* is ( attractivest / most attractive ).
- 2. The comparative form of *bored* is ( border / more bored ).
- 3. The superlative form of *few* is ( fewer / fewest ).
- 4. The comparative form of *colossal* is ( more colossal / colossaler ).

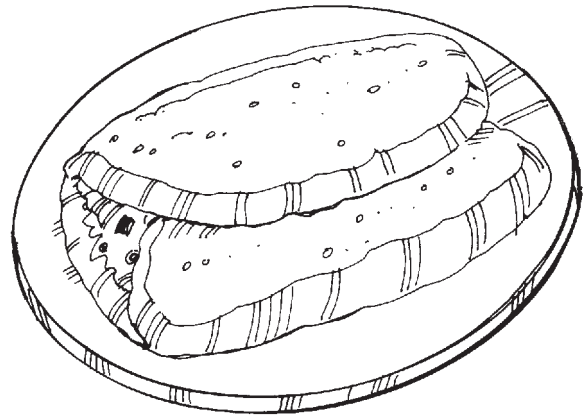
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## INFORMATION IN A DICTIONARY ENTRY 2

**A. Directions:** Some words have more than one acceptable spelling. Remember that the preferred spelling is always listed *first* in a dictionary entry. Complete the word pairs below with either the preferred spelling or its less common alternate.

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. _____ / omelette  | 6. gladioluses / _____ |
| 2. octopuses / _____ | 7. _____ / make-up     |
| 3. _____ / larvas    | 8. hallelujah / _____  |
| 4. _____ / teepee    |                        |
| 5. leveled / _____   |                        |



**B. Directions:**

Some dictionaries include a word's *etymology*, or original source, before or after its definition. Draw a line to match each word with its origin.

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. <b>anemone</b>   | a. from the Irish word <i>seamrog</i> , meaning "little clover"                                 |
| 2. <b>castanets</b> | b. named by Spanish dancers who saw that this instrument looked like two chestnuts              |
| 3. <b>catamaran</b> | c. from two Latin words, <i>unum</i> ("one") and <i>cornu</i> ("horn")                          |
| 4. <b>geranium</b>  | d. from the Tamil word <i>katta-marran</i> , meaning "tied wood"                                |
| 5. <b>mercurial</b> | e. from two Greek words, <i>anemos</i> ("wind") and <i>mone</i> ("habitation")                  |
| 6. <b>shamrock</b>  | f. from <i>Mercury</i> , the fast messenger of the Roman gods                                   |
| 7. <b>unicorn</b>   | g. named for the crane, <i>geranos</i> in Greek, because its seed pods look like a crane's head |

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## DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION I

**A word's denotation is its literal meaning. The connotation of the same word may be something quite different.**

A word's *connotation* is its implied meaning. Connotation arises from the ideas, emotions, and experiences associated with the word. Two words with nearly the same denotation may have very different connotations.

**EXAMPLE:**

**opponent** (positive connotation, suggesting a worthy competitor)

**foe** (negative connotation, suggesting an enemy)



**A. Directions:** Write **P** for *positive* or **N** for *negative* next to each word below.

- |                  |                   |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. ____ wretched | 5. ____ humane    | 9. ____ fantastic |
| 2. ____ unique   | 6. ____ sneaky    | 10. ____ snob     |
| 3. ____ survive  | 7. ____ spry      | 11. ____ valiant  |
| 4. ____ gangster | 8. ____ embarrass | 12. ____ wilt     |

**B. Directions:** Words in the box are *synonyms* (with different connotations) of the words below. Write the matching word from the box next to each word below. Hint: You will *not* use all the words.

<b>accumulate</b>	<b>custodian</b>	<b>devise</b>	<b>aroma</b>	<b>assertive</b>	<b>vigorous</b>
<b>bold</b>	<b>crowd</b>	<b>emphasize</b>	<b>doubtful</b>	<b>thin</b>	<b>persuade</b>

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. contrive / _____   | 6. brazen / _____  |
| 2. aggressive / _____ | 7. janitor / _____ |
| 3. mob / _____        | 8. odor / _____    |
| 4. hoard / _____      | 9. belabor / _____ |
| 5. brainwash / _____  | 10. gaunt / _____  |

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## DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION 2



**Making careful word choices ensures that you get your message across.**

People use *euphemisms* to replace words that are thought to be too strong or unpleasant.

**EXAMPLE:** *passed away* instead of *died*

*Dysphemisms* are harsher words deliberately used to replace neutral words.

**EXAMPLE:** *quack* instead of *doctor*

**Directions:** Complete the chart below with the euphemisms, dysphemisms, or neutral words from the box on the right. Hint: You will *not* use all the words.

EUPHEMISM	NEUTRAL WORD	DYSPHEMISM
1. firm	obstinate	_____
2. fervent	_____	hysterical
3. _____	charity	handout
4. move on	leave	_____
5. assist	_____	abet
6. _____	unusual	abnormal
7. developing country	underdeveloped country	_____
8. challenged	_____	crippled
9. _____	worker	hireling
10. peacekeeper	_____	mercenary
11. man's best friend	dog	_____
12. _____	house	shack
13. lounge	_____	toilet

- WORD LIST**

  - abandon**
  - abrupt**
  - cur**
  - diner**
  - disabled**
  - donation**
  - emotional**
  - employee**
  - hash-house**
  - help**
  - mansion**
  - pig-headed**
  - quick**
  - restaurant**
  - restroom**
  - rude**
  - soldier**
  - special**
  - third-world**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_